

Subject: [Fwd: Letter to the Editor]

Date: Sun, 03 Apr 2005 12:36:27 -0700

From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

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Subject: Letter to the Editor

Date: Sun, 03 Apr 2005 12:28:29 -0700

From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

To: Outlook <newsroom@northshoreoutlook.com>

Dear Editor,

Andrew McCredie's March 31st editorial, "A Closer Look," detailing the GVRD's water conservation plan, provides readers with an excellent overview of how GVRD officials have failed to consider the future water needs of the region. Whenever the topic of water comes up, we are bullied and shamed into believing we are water hogs or lectured that our per capita water usage exceeds European countries or some big cities in the States (as if the water usage of apartment dwellers in Paris is relevant to our situation here on the "Wet Coast").

Water "conservation" has been deemed a virtue to the point where a brown lawn, a dead garden, and a filthy car in the summertime has become a badge of social responsibility. People seem not to know that water is a completely renewable resource.

For some time now the GVRD has been lobbying for measures beyond escalating summer watering restrictions. Mandating low-flow toilets and household water meters is being pushed onto municipalities, but at what cost?

GVRD officials will only grudgingly admit that installing water meters across the region has an estimated price tag of at least \$420 million -- and this figure does not include ongoing administration costs. By comparison, the cost of obtaining full access to the huge Coquitlam Lake reservoir would amount to \$342 million and together with Capilano and Seymour reservoirs, could supply the region's water needs -- without metering -- for the next 40-plus years. Beyond that time-line there is Allouette Lake, Stave Lake, and Pitt Lake. Some even suggest massive Harrison Lake as a water source, however it would be a more expensive longer-term option that could supply water for a population of tens of millions.

It has been many decades since the GVRD has increased our water supply capacity yet our population is growing every year. Is it really practical or even fair to suggest, as did a senior GVRD bureaucrat last year, that we should all get used to brown lawns and dead gardens every summer? What are we going to do when another half-million or more people are living here?

The answer is clear: Greater Vancouver is blessed with an abundance of fresh water reservoirs and utilizing just a tiny fraction of these water sources would not result in any negative environmental impacts. Water metering is economically unjustified and does nothing to address the water shortfall we now experience every summer.

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